

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 18, 1966

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This is one of those days of sleeping delightfully late, actually getting started about 10 with coffee and juice in my room.

Talking with Bess, with Helen about the things I need to take on my Big Bend weekend trip, and actually my accomplishments were zero for the morning.

The big event of the day was lunch with the wives of some of the men who do the most for Lyndon and me. I had asked them for what I hoped would be an intimate, self-indulgent, amusing, get-to-know-you sort of occasion.

Bess and Trudy Califano, and Liz, and Mary Jane Carter, and Libby Cater, Mrs. Bob Fleming, Ashton, Clay McPherson, Judith Moyers, Lillian Reedy, Mrs. Roger Stevens (I haven't learned yet to call her Christine), Mary Margaret, and lovely little Marian Watson, and Christine Stugard.

We met at the pool a little past twelve. Nearly everybody in swimming suits, but not everybody in swimming. Plentiful bloody Mary's and soft drinks. Bess, that natural athlete, is a good swimmer; and Libby Cater; and blond Marian Watson in a pleated pink bathing suit looked right off a Valentine.

About ten of the fifteen of us, swam or draped around the pool. I did my minimum of 20 laps, and then we went upstairs, borrowed Luci's quarters, the first time I've ever had a party, in the solarium, and it was

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absolutely delightful. Bess had a buffet, a yellow covered table, with a beautiful fruit centerpiece. A ^{guiche} quick lorraine, and that's what we all talked about. Two big covered silver dishes, with flame under them - shrimp and lobster I believe they were, with rice, and a green salad. And a most handsome strawberry dessert. It was a complete change of pace from anything I've ever done in the White House. It made a very relaxed and different atmosphere, and everybody responded by becoming different personalities. It wasn't as good as Camp David, for the purpose I had in mind, but it was the right tempo for 'getting to know you' better.

The husbands of so many of these women, have given such long hours, I wanted a few hours of intimacy, of saying thanks, of listening to their stories. Particular, the new Mrs. Bob Fleming, Mary Jane Carter, who's been with us so long, but whom we see so seldom; the same for Lillian Reedy. Mrs. Roger Stevens, who just brushes the periphery of our lives, whose husband adds a certain luster in a segment of this society, that we don't touch much.

Along with dessert, we began telling stories, and Christine Stugard came up with some delightful ones about the mail, particularly what our young correspondents ask. One youthful ^{arch} ~~art~~ student had written in, "Dear Mrs. Johnson: Will you please tell me why Michael Angelo's Moses has horns." I hope she looked it up for him; I couldn't have answered it.

Bess told them about the discreet, efficient, pleasant White House operators, who are always trying to protect us, to play detective for us,

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who do such a wonderful job really. And then one night, when she was trying to put a show together, she, Bess, received a telephone call from an harassed White House operator, who said she had a party on the line, who kept on insisting that he was Gregory Peck. The operator thought it was pure hoax, but no, that's just who Bess needed at the moment.

Luci's finger drawing, left on the picture window from her birthday party, the shelves of beer mugs from many colleges, the funny pictures, all stamp it as Luci's room, and a few of them, Ashton especially, shared it with Luci.

When they left a little after three, I thought it had been a good idea. It had gone over about grade B, not better, though all of Bess's stage setting A plus. It was a chemistry, a catalytic affect, that the hostess alone, can provide. I tried, but I didn't quite get the firecrackers going.

One of the nice moments was to discuss with Libby Cater, the redecorating on the third floor. I'd had the loveliest letter from her. She's one of my favorites in this really very attractive group of young people.

Then into Ashton's office, to listen to Luci read her birthday note to Lynda, the burden of which is Live, Live, Live. She's sending it out by a special messenger - Woody - on what we call "his' planes" - American Airlines, ^{with a} The great mass of eye makeup, which she obviously doesn't think Lynda Bird will really know how to use.

Just as I sent out my Inaugural coat.

I spent the next hour, trying on clothes with Bess and Helen - hems,

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decisions, accessories. What a ~~bo~~^{le}

A little work with Ashton and signing of mail.

Liz, of all things, had a call from Lynda, and George. It was a sort of an S.O.S. George said, "It's another Alamo. We're besieged on all sides." There problem was, he was having a cocktail party for something over a hundred Hollywood personalities, to introduce Lynda Bird to them, how should he handle the press? Liz, really pleased, I think, that they should call on her, and Lynda Bird doesn't often do that, suggested that when Lynda was all dressed to go to the front door, or the front gate of a pretty place of their choice, and give them five minutes to take pictures, and then some responsible, discreet person, perhaps George himself, come out once or twice, perhaps at the end of the evening, and tell them a little bit about the party - not let them inside - not make a Roman circus of it, but afford them some help.

Later on, I felt, apparently it had worked because the pictures, the stories were all delightful, in the most unpredictable, and often cruel, little and kookie city, my/Lynda Bird fared very well.

There was one sad moment, when AnnHand called to say goodbye to me. She and Lloyd, Cathy, and Bridget, and Thomas, and Lloyd, and Susan, had all packed up and left in one day's time, to go back to California, where Lloyd is going to run for Lt. Governor. I felt a bit hurt, a bit sad, to say goodbye to them so swiftly, with a State Dinner coming up. This is a once-in a lifetime chance for him. I know I must think of that first and I want

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Lyndon to. But they're gone and I feel that I have let a year pass in which I didn't come close enough to them and really express my appreciation for them being a part of the team. That I could do and not depend on Lyndon, so I hope I will learn.

It had been a very hard day for Lyndon. It was after eight when we talked, and he said, "Let's have somebody quiet and easy over, to eat with us." I reminded him that most people ^{had eaten} ~~ate~~ by this time, and sure enough, when I called the Deasons, they had already had dinner, but they came to sit with us and have coffee and dessert, and keep Lyndon company. They came about nine, it was one of those decelerating times, when Lyndon comes down off the mountain, so to speak.

We talked about people who'd been in the NYA, where they are now. About ~~are~~ our various families of beagles and where the Deason children are going to college.

And when Lyndon went in to have a massage, Bill accompanied him to talk, I said, "Jeannie, come on in while I get a rub too."

It's wonderful to have friends that you can feel that close around.

But it was an early night, a day of trying, and not very much achievement.

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